Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Shellybanks ETNS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

We note that throughout this document, the term 'parent(s)' should be understood to mean 'parent(s) and/or guardian(s)'.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The Board is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which-
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

- Effective leadership;

- A school-wide approach;

- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;

- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
  - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

- Supports for staff;

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;

- cyber-bullying;

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs. This type of bullying often takes the form of name-calling;

- physical aggression;

- intimidation;

- damage to property;

- extortion.

Further details on these types of bullying are included in Appendix A below.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private message, do not fall within the definition of bullying. These will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

The impacts of bullying can be very serious for both victims and perpetrators of bullying. For victims, feelings of insecurity, low self-confidence and anxiety may merge. This can also be the case for those who witness bullying. Children who engage in bullying behaviour can be at higher risk of depression, and may be at risk of developing an anti-social personality and of reducing their educational opportunities.

Additional information on different types of bullying and the different impacts of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
(see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the supervision of the Principal, to act and prevent bullying or aggressive behaviour in the school community.

The relevant teacher, in the first instance, is the child's Class Teacher. He or she will ordinarily have primary responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying. Where this is not possible or appropriate, the Principal will nominate another staff member to deal with the situation. It is recognised that our teachers have the professional skills to deal with most instances of bullying within their day-to-day class management work. If the bullying is of a very serious nature, the Principal/Deputy Principal will also be involved. Furthermore, the Board of Management will also be involved, in line with the reporting procedures of Section 6 below and with the school's Code of Behaviour.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

A Positive School Culture

● Shellybanks ETNS actively embraces difference and diversity and prides itself on its inclusive approach to education.

● Our school ethos is founded on respect for individuals' differences: these are promoted as a source of pride and self-respect.

● Tolerance and inclusion are at the heart of our school's life.

● These values underpin the Learn Together ethical education programme; this provides a platform for our school's education based anti-bullying measures.

Curriculum

In raising awareness and understanding of how bullying occurs and providing the pupils with the skills and strategies to counter bullying in its various forms, curriculum implementation will place a particular emphasis on re-affirming the pupil's sense of self-esteem and self-worth through supporting the pupils in developing empathy, respect and resilience. These skills are delivered across all subject areas and through a welcoming school climate which respects diversity in all its forms. However there will be a particular focus on bullying delivered through the following:

- Stay Safe Programme - will be taught in Senior Infants, First, Third and Fifth classes. This introduces our children to their right to live a bullying-free life, and develops skills in saying 'no' to anyone impinging on that right.

- SPHE Programme includes elements dealing with LGBT issues, and the need for respect for individuals differences in this regard.

- Learn Together Programme - time will be devoted to an age-appropriate discussion of bullying at each class level. Children will be encouraged and helped to say "No" to bullying behaviour and to report experiences of bullying.

- Internet Safety Week: The school is committed to providing internet safety to all its students and will endeavour to maintain internet safety awareness through approaches such as Internet Safety Week and tailored lessons throughout the school year. This will include work dealing specifically with cyber-bullying.

- Pupils will participate in a range of age-appropriate prevention and education programmes during their time in Shellybanks ETNS. These programmes will form a permanent part of the school calendar. Anticipating that different programmes will be available to the school at different times, we note that these may include (but not be restricted to) such programmes as SALT, Sticks and Stones, and the ISPCC Shield Campaign.

- Other classroom and whole-school activities, e.g. friendship week, drama and story-telling will also be undertaken to reinforce the importance of positive behaviour in the school.

- Together, these approaches engender a shared understanding among pupils of what bullying is and what its effects can be. Our children learn that bullying is wrong.

Staff Training

We note that prevention of and dealing with bullying has formed an important part of the professional education of our teaching staff. Recognising the need for on-going training in this area, training events will be made available to teachers to raise awareness around bullying, and

to enhance their skills in preventing and dealing with the different types of bullying that occur in schools. The need for such training will be discussed explicitly during the school-year planning period at the beginning of the first term of each year. The outcome of this discussion will be communicated to the Board of Management and training events will be put in place.

Yard Time

- Yard time can be a 'hot-spot' for bullying behaviour. The school's procedures ensure that adequate numbers of staff are on duty in the yard at all times.

- The school has a proactive approach to encouraging positive behaviour at yard. This includes initiatives such as the Friendship Circle and rewards for positive behaviour on leaving and returning to class (Best Líne award).

- Behaviour at yard time is reviewed at our staff meetings and through the yard committee.

- The yard committee will undertake an annual review of the procedures used at Yard Time and provide a brief report on this review to the Board of Management. This review must take place in the second term of the school year and will form part of the Board's annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Supervision
- School activities are supervised and monitored at all times, with particular emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying are more likely to occur, such as assembly time, play time, dismissal time and school outings/trips.

Disclosure

- Children are encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.

- The difference between 'telling tales' about incidents of a minor nature and telling to 'stay safe' will be thoroughly explained.

- Specific initiatives that teach children that bullying should be reported are included in the curriculum-based approaches described above.

Role of parents/guardians

- Parents have a crucial role in the whole-school community approach to positive behaviour. This policy aims to provide parents with an understanding of the nature, types and effects of bullying. The description of bullying given in this policy, as provided by the Department

of Education and Skills, establishes the clear distinction between consensual 'rough play' and bullying.

● The school will seek to raise awareness among parents of issues related to bullying through the following measures:
  (i) circulation of this policy via the school website;
  (ii) provision of information leaflets on bullying;
  (iii) provision of guidelines on what to do if parents feel that their child is engaging in bullying/is being bullied at school;
  (iv) organizing information sessions on bullying (including cyber-bullying).

● The school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be available to view on our school website.

● ParentsGuardians should encourage children to resolve difficulties without resorting to aggression and encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.

● Parents/Guardians should look out for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others and should report this to the school.

● Parents/Guardians should discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with their child and endeavor to support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

● Parents/Guardians must take full responsibility for their children's inappropriate use of the Internet or mobile phones outside school. Parents should ensure that their child's use of social media is age-appropriate.

The Wider Community

● The school, through the Principal, will liaise with relevant parties in the wider community to raise awareness of the issue of bullying. Our neighbours in the community and others such as coach drivers and lollipop ladies will be made aware of the importance of reporting instances of bullying behaviour involving our children to the school.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

Investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour

I. Bullying behaviour thrives where there is confusion about what constitutes bullying, when strategies and procedures are not in place, when children are too fearful to tell or feel that nothing will be done about it if they do tell. The procedures outlined here seek to ensure that all reports of bullying are investigated fully and with absolute fairness, and that children who report bullying feel safe and supported.

II. The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to ensure that the bullying stops, to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

III. All reports including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant Class Teacher (see Section 4 above) who will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine if bullying has occurred and how it is best resolved. This will build the children's confidence in 'telling'

IV. All teaching and non-teaching staff (school secretary, SNA's, caretaker, cleaners etc.) who witness bullying should report it to the relevant Class Teacher or to the Principal.

V. Pupils will be informed that when they report incidents of bullying, they are acting responsibly.

VI. A calm unemotional problem-solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.

VII. Incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the Class Teacher (i.e. the relevant teacher). All incidents will be dealt with sensitively and with due regard for the rights of all involved, including the rights of privacy and confidentiality.

VIII. Answers will be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why.

IX. On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with it will first interview the alleged victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the alleged victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.

X. An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s) (where there is more than one alleged perpetrator, pupils will be met individually first and then as a group).

XI. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy. Efforts will be made to ensure that he/she sees the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

XII. Having discussed the negative impact which bullying has on both victim(s) and perpetrator(s), and when the relevant teacher deems it appropriate, the parties will be brought together in a safe and sensitive manner to work together towards the restoration of a positive, mutually respectful relationship where bullying does not occur again. We note that the different parties have different but complementary responsibilities in engaging with this process. This will be done under the guidance of the Class Teacher. This process respects the primary aim of the investigation of incidents of bullying as described in item (ii) above. It is recognised that this approach may not be appropriate to every incident of bullying, especially those of a more serious nature. In such cases, escalation as per item (xiv) will take place and alternative approaches will be taken. The school's Code of Behaviour will be implemented as appropriate.

XIII. In all cases where a teacher deems that bullying behaviour has occurred, a record of the incident(s) must be submitted to and retained by the Principal using the form Appendix B: Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour (see below). The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

XIV. Incidents which are of a serious nature, or which involve pupils from a number of classes will be referred to the Principal. The parents/guardians of victims and alleged perpetrators will be informed at an early stage that the investigation has been escalated in this manner.

XV. Where an incident of bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher and the Principal will ensure that other relevant staff members (e.g. those on yard duty, those supervising the pupils involved in any capacity) are aware of the incident. The aim of this is to ensure "continuity of care" for the children at a vulnerable time.

XVI. Where further action is required on foot of the alleged bullying, this will be undertaken following the procedures described in the school's Code of Behaviour, and will involve the Board of Management as per those procedures.

XVII. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible

XVIII. In cases where it is considered by the relevant teacher that the bullying behaviour has not been addressed within 20 school days of when the bullying occurred, it will be recorded again by the relevant teacher (see Appendix B: Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour). In such a case, the form should be clearly marked "Repeat report of this incident".

XIX.   Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

XX.   In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

XXI.   Where the instances of bullying fall into the relevant categories, the school will refer those instances to the appropriate agencies (HSE Children and Family Services, National Educational Psychological Service, An Garda Síochána) in line with Sections 6.8.12 – 6.8.14 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

XXII.   The school Principal will provide regular reports to the Board of Management on instances of bullying within the school: this will form part of the Principal's report to the Board at each meeting.

XXIII.   The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. In each given year, this will take place at the next Board meeting which falls after the date (day and month) of the adoption of this policy. This review will be informed by Appendix 4: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and its Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. This is included below as Appendix C to this document.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

A central principle of the school's approach to supporting victims of bullying is that all reports of bullying will be taken seriously: children who report bullying or who are reported as being victims of bullying will be listened to and supported. All reports of bullying will be acted on as described in Section 6 above.

The school recognises that bullying can have profoundly negative effects on those involved, both victims and perpetrators. Thus a system of supports is in place to minimise these effects.

Following on from instances of bullying, and having acted on this as described in Section 6 above, the school will closely monitor all pupils involved (both victims and perpetrators). This monitoring will be done primarily by the Class Teacher, in liaison with the Principal, but other relevant staff also have a role here (cf. Section 6, item (xv)).

This will allow the school to determine whether or not the bullying behaviour has stopped and to act accordingly as necessary. It will allow the school to gauge any negative effects that the incident(s) have had on those involved, and will allow the school to take steps to counteract such effects.

Children affected by bullying will take part in activities to build self-esteem and self-worth and to build the resilience of all involved.

When those who have been bullied are ready, the school's Code of Behaviour advocates a restorative justice approach aimed at restoring positive relationships. In this approach, the child who has engaged in bullying behaviour is encouraged to acknowledge their wrongdoing and the harm they have caused, and then acts restoratively (e.g. through an apology and an undertaking not to engage in bullying behaviour again). The victim of the bullying is encouraged to accept this apology and to allow the development of a positive relationship between the individuals involved (see also Section 6, item (xii) above).

Where necessary, therapeutic support will be made available, to resolve deep hurts suffered by the victims. Likewise, supports will be made available to perpetrators to enable them take responsibility for their behaviour, to gain insight into why they are bullying and to change this behaviour.

All such supports will be applied in consultation with the children's parents, with relevant professionals and with relevant national agencies.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Shellybanks ETNS strives to provide a positive, welcoming and respectful environment for all members of the school community. Thus the school recognises that all members of the school community, both children and adults, have the right to learn, play, work or otherwise contribute to

the life of the school free from harassment by other members of the school community. For further details on this point, please refer to the school's policy on Dignity and Respect.

8. This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 5th October, 2015

9. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the school's patron.

10. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and published on the school website.

Signed: Jessica Ryan   Signed: Therese Gamble
      (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date reviewed: 5th October, 2015

Date of next review: October, 2016

Appendix A – Types of Bullying

The following extract comprises Section 2.2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

o **Physical aggression**: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

o **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

o **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying**: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

o **Cyber-bullying**: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

o **Name calling**: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

o **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

o **Extortion**: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Appendix B- Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group:

Name _____Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report
(tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents
(tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ Date _____
     (Relevant Teacher)

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix C- Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____ Date _____

      Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____

      Principal

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Shellybanks Educate Together National School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed _____ Date _____
       Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
       Principal